

10-30-2006 NCAA Presidential Task Force Report

1 (File: 20061030 Pres Task Force report)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With Myles". Today  
3 Dr. Brand and I will discuss the recently released report from  
4 the Presidential Task Force.

5 Dr. Brand, why was it necessary to bring presidents  
6 and chancellors together to discuss college sports?

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think college sports is just  
8 doing terrific. We're seeing more and more people in the  
9 stands. It's more exciting every day. But that doesn't mean  
10 it's the best it could possibly be.

11 And there are some issues related to college sports  
12 that need attention of the presidents. For example, the  
13 ability to balance the budgets, which is very difficult to be  
14 able to, while increasing on a reasonable rate, budget  
15 expenditures; not to overdo it so it doesn't make it more  
16 difficult for the campus to meet its other obligations.

17 We want to talk about student athlete well being, for  
18 example. Should we look for some alternatives to the way we  
19 fund grants-in-aid? Should they be for a longer period of  
20 time? Should they extend for five years? I don't know what  
21 the answers are, and the task force didn't decide the answers.  
22 But I think they did identify what are the critical questions  
23 for student athlete well being.

24 So there are a bunch of issues that I think the  
25 presidents needed to address, given -- and this is really

1 important, Josh -- given that we've got -- getting a good  
2 handle on academic reform. So it's the next steps after  
3 academic reform.

4 JOSH CENTOR: If I'm an average fan, though, I might  
5 not walk into a football stadium or a basketball arena and  
6 recognize that there are some issues with college sports.

7 Why is it important for fans to be aware that the NCAA  
8 is looking into academic reform and does have a Presidential  
9 Task Force looking at some of these issues?

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: You're right. If you're an average  
11 fan watching it on TV or going to the stadium, you don't care  
12 what's going on in the internal workings of college sports as  
13 much as you care about is the game enjoyable? Is it  
14 competitive? And is my team winning?

15 But, you know, these things don't happen by  
16 themselves. And universities have to be able to pay attention  
17 to the environment in which students play the games and the  
18 environment in which they are supported and how do you provide  
19 enough financial support so that they're successful -- not  
20 only on the high profile football and basketball -- but how do  
21 we make sure that we have enough resources in the athletic  
22 department so that the other 24 sports on campus can also  
23 compete? And so they'll have travel programs so they can go  
24 to away games?

25 How do we make sure there's enough resources there,

1 both in terms of good coaching, travel, and everything else  
2 you need, to have a good athletic program across the board?

3 So that's what presidents and athletic directors worry  
4 about, because they all love to watch the games, as they're  
5 fans too.

6 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: But they're the ones responsible for  
8 what goes on inside the black box.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Now, the environment you spoke of and  
10 the financial model, if you will, for the different schools --  
11 we had a bunch of presidents and chancellors. I mean, their  
12 financial model and the environment on their respective  
13 campuses isn't the same for each president and chancellor on  
14 the task force.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's not the same, but there are  
16 relative similarities that are important. In fact, the main  
17 point here is that you've got to think of athletics budgets in  
18 the same way you think of budgets for the rest of the  
19 university. You've got to think of athletics as a imbedded in  
20 not just the values, the educational values, but the  
21 operational approaches. You shouldn't be thinking of  
22 athletics as a standalone enterprise that is in the  
23 entertainment business. That's not true.

24 It's part of the mission of the institution, both in  
25 terms of education of the people who play in the games, but

1     importantly in the way you finance it and how you run it  
2     through your university. And so what the task force was  
3     looking for is how do we operationally make sure that these  
4     games we're playing are sound, so that people can continue to  
5     watch the games, particularly the highly visible ones, but  
6     most importantly, so we can provide genuine participation  
7     opportunities for as many students as possible -- young women  
8     and men to enjoy themselves even if there isn't a big crowd  
9     watching a volleyball game or a soccer game.

10           JOSH CENTOR: Absolutely. I think to me the fact that  
11     presidents are involved here is interesting. I mean, we know  
12     that athletics are integral within the mission of higher  
13     education. But when you think presidents, I mean, you're a  
14     president -- and busy folks. There are a lot of different  
15     things going on on campuses.

16           How are they balancing, you know, their involvement  
17     with these athletics issues and then the other things that go  
18     on on campuses?

19           DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, I would say if you had to  
20     look at the hallmark of reform and change in intercollegiate  
21     athletics in the last decade, motivated in part by a Knight  
22     Commission report a number of years ago, is the engagement of  
23     presidents. They're not going to be able to do day-to-day  
24     operational; they're not the managers of intercollegiate  
25     athletics.

1           That is what athletic directors do, and they do it  
2 very well, and it's hard work. But oversight for policy and  
3 major direction changes, how it all fits together, not just  
4 athletics, but the rest of the university, that is part of the  
5 president's or chancellor's responsibility.

6           How much time does it take up? Probably not a lot,  
7 but maybe a bit more than some of the other units on campus  
8 they deal with, because they have a wide venue.

9           JOSH CENTOR: A lot of units, yeah.

10          DR. MYLES BRAND: A lot of units, wide menu of things  
11 both inside and outside the university, they have to worry  
12 about. But they can't ignore athletics or think that it can  
13 run by itself. They need to be engaged.

14          JOSH CENTOR: A couple of questions that stood out to  
15 me in looking through the task force report. Why can't the  
16 NCAA -- why can't we, inside the building, prescribe financial  
17 solutions for the member institutions?

18          DR. MYLES BRAND: The simple answer is it's illegal.

19          JOSH CENTOR: Really?

20          DR. MYLES BRAND: Yes. It's antitrust. We can't  
21 prescribe how much people are paid, who is employed, and how  
22 institutions will use their money in regard to particularly  
23 about personnel issues. That's antitrust. And so we are not  
24 permitted to do that.

25          That makes it difficult from academic reform, in which

1 we can from the national office have uniform standards. We  
2 think of them as minimal standards.

3 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

4 DR. MYLES BRAND: And institutions are expected to do  
5 better, but we can do that nationally. What we can't do  
6 nationally are things that affect expenditures, budgets,  
7 salaries, those kind of issues. And for that, we need each  
8 institution, armed with good data, to be able to make the  
9 basic decisions.

10 JOSH CENTOR: Okay. And drawing off your answer,  
11 another one of the recommendations in the report was to  
12 strengthen administrations' procedures on the campuses. What  
13 happened there? And what was some of that discussion like?  
14 Is this a realistic thing to strengthen administrations'  
15 procedures?

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think it's just the question that  
17 we want to make sure that all the student athletes who are  
18 playing come through normal administrations' processes. And  
19 each institution is going to. You know, we talked a couple  
20 weeks ago, I think it was, about prep schools.

21 JOSH CENTOR: Yes.

22 DR. MYLES BRAND: And that's related to  
23 administrations' procedures. Let's just make sure that the  
24 students we admit, whether in athletics or otherwise to our  
25 campuses, are capable of doing college work and have good

1 prospects of graduating before we let them in the front door.

2 JOSH CENTOR: And what are some of the next steps for  
3 this presidential body, this task force? Are we going to see  
4 some more discussions? Or are they done initially? What's  
5 going on?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Very good question. This is a  
7 report that has to be implemented. We can't assume that just  
8 issuing the report means that everything it talks about and  
9 all the recommendations it makes are going to happen. So I  
10 think over the next couple years, two or three years, we're  
11 going to find specific implementations strategies that the  
12 presidents are engaged in through the NCAA.

13 But, more importantly, is that the spirit of the  
14 report, the cultural changes it's trying to create in  
15 intercollegiate athletics come to fruition. That's what's  
16 important. And that's going to take hard work and concerted  
17 effort on the campus for each president. It isn't all  
18 regulatory. It's attitudinal.

19 JOSH CENTOR: Well, this is really important stuff, so  
20 I would tell our listeners to realize that we're going to be  
21 talking about it again, pick out some of these things, and  
22 maybe have specific conversations about them.

23 We thank you for listening to "Mondays With Myles",  
24 and hope you'll join us next week.

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